

Message Text

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ACTION SIL-01

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C O N F I D E N T I A L EC BRUSSELS 09327

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, SP

SUBJECT: RIFT IN BASQUE STV TRADE UNION

REF: (A) BRUSSELS 8982, (B) MADRID 7119 (NOTAL)

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED:

1. THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS (ICFTU) HAS PLACED ITSELF SOLIDLY AND PUBLICLY BEHIND THE TRADITIONAL LEADERS OF THE SOLIDARITY OF BASQUE WORKERS (STV) AND AGAINST A DISSIDENT FACTION THAT HAS SOUGHT TO ASSUME THE STV MANTLE.

2. ICFTU GENERAL SECRETARY OTTO KERSTEN ON SEPTEMBER 22 MET WITH FOUR STV OFFICIALS--MANU ROBLES ARANGUIZ, PRESIDENT; JOSE MIGUEL LEUNDA, VICE PRESIDENT; ALFONSO ECHEVERRIA, GENERAL SECRETARY; AND ALEX AGRUIRREZABAL, SECRETARY FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS-AND AGREED TO ISSUE A PRESS RELEASE SUPPORTING THEM.

3. KEY SENTENCES OF THAT PRESS RELEASE, ISSUED TODAY IN FRENCH, ARE THESE (MISSION'S TRANSLATION):
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"THE ICFTU GENERAL SECRETARY, AFTER HAVING

CONGRATULATED HIS GUESTS FOR THE WORK DONE TO ASSURE THE UNITY OF BASQUE WORKERS WITHIN AN AUTHENTIC TRADE UNION, AS WELL AS FOR THE GOOD COOPERATION EXISTING BETWEEN THE STV AND THE GENERAL UNION OF WORKERS OF SPAIN AFFILIATED WITH THE ICFTU, VIGOROUSLY CONDEMNED THE DIVISIVE MANEUVER OF A GROUP THAT, CALLING ITSELF STV AND AN ICFTU MEMBER, IS TRYING TO BREAK THE DEMOCRATIC UNION FRONT THAT BATTLES FOR FULL TRADE UNION FREEDOM AND DEMOCRATIC LIBERTY FOR ALL CITIZENS WITHOUT EXCEPTION. THE ICFTU GENERAL SECRETARY SOLEMNLY CONFIRMED THAT THE ONLY STV RECOGNIZED BY THE ICFTU IS THAT WHICH IS LED BY THE COMRADE MANU ROBLES ARANGUIZ."

4. THE PRESS RELEASE SAID THAT THE STV WOULD HOLD A CONGRESS ON OCTOBER 30 AND 31, ATTENDED BY MORE THAN 1,500 DELEGATES, PLUS FRATERNAL DELEGATES FROM FREE TRADE UNION ORGANIZATIONS OF EUROPE. THE STATEMENT NOTED THAT THE OCTOBER 30-31 CONGRESS WAS A "SECOND SESSION" FOLLOWING UP A SESSION THAT HAD BEEN HELD EARLIER AT DURANGO (FROM 16 TO 20 APRIL OR AUGUST-- MONTH UNCLEAR ON DOCUMENT). END UNCLASSIFIED

5. IN A CONVERSATION WITH THE USEC LABOR ATTACHE, ENZO FRISCO, ICFTU GENERAL SECRETARY FOR EUROPE, SAID THAT THE WORLD CONFEDERATION OF LABOR (WCL, TO WHICH THE STV IS ALSO AFFILIATED, HAD SOUGHT TO ARRANGE A JOINT ICFTU-WCL MEETING WITH THE STV DELEGATION TO PRESSURE ARANGUIZ AND HIS COLLEAGUES TO MAKE PEACE WITH THE DISSIDENT FACTION. ACCORDING TO FRISO, THE WCL'S ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY FOR EUROPE, GERARD FONTENEAU, SPENT A VACATION THIS SUMMER IN THE BASQUE AREA, AND CAME BACK WITH A REPORT FAVORABLE TO THE DISSIDENT "YOUNG TURKS". HOWEVER, THE ICFTU COULD NOT TAKE SIDES IN AN INTERNAL DISPUTE, SAID FRISO, ADDING THAT ARANGUIZ AND HIS PEOPLE FELT IN CONTROL OF THE SITUATION AND DID NOT ASK FOR BRUSSELS MEDIATION.

6. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE FOUR-MAN DELEGATION MET SEPTEMBER 23 WITH EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION
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AND EARLIER WITH THE WCL. WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO REACH WCL OFFICIALS FOR COMMENT. FONTENEAU IS OUT OF TOWN, BUT THE USEC LABOR ATTACHE HAS AN APPOINTMENT WITH HIM SEPTEMBER 28 TO PURSUE THIS AND RELATED MATTERS.
HINTON

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